Quick Facts on China:

Population: 1,338,612,968 (July 2009 est.)
GDP: $7.8 trillion (2008 est.)
Industry 50%; Services 40%; Agriculture 10%
GINI Index: 47%
Labor Force: 807.7 million
Literacy Rate: 90.9%

Bibliography


China, Climate Change, & Effective Communication

Exploring meaningful cross-cultural interactions to address 21st century challenges and engage in sustainable dialogue.

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ECOLOGIA

Bringing international perspectives and resources to local sustainable development projects, and bringing locally based ‘on the ground’ experience back to the world of international decision making.

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U.S.-China communication is key to successful mitigation of climate change. This pamphlet aims to provide users with several useful tools for engaging in climate change talks: a breakdown of China’s energy consumption and relevant cultural information, current climate change policies, talking points, and critical questions for consideration.

Coal consumption in China is projected to double in the next 20 years to 4 billion tons (Figure 1). This increase in coal consumption will lead to an immense growth in emissions. That said, from a historical perspective, the U.S.’s cumulative CO2 emissions far exceed China’s past emissions (Figure 2). Indeed, in 1994 China’s CO2 emissions were measured at 2.6 billion tons per year, but by 2007 it surpassed the U.S. to become the world’s largest CO2 emitter with nearly 7 billion tons of CO2 emissions for that year (Figure 3). Yet, per capita emissions in the U.S. are more than four times as high as China’s (Figure 4). Furthermore, not only do the bulk of China’s emissions stem from heavy industry—in contrast to U.S. emissions that are primarily concentrated in the service sector—but also, 28% of China’s energy consumption is directly linked to export production.

**China’s Official Policy: Principles and Objectives**

- To address climate change within framework of sustainable development
- To follow principle of common but differentiated responsibilities
- To place equal emphasis on mitigation and adaptation
- To integrate climate change with other interrelated policies
- To rely on the advancement of science and technology
- To participate in international cooperation actively and extensively
- To control GHG emissions
- To enhance capacity of adaptation to climate change
- To enhance R&D
- To raise public awareness and improve management

**Talking Points**

- Infrastructure development
  - Improvement of grid infrastructure through smart grid technology
  - Development of demand-reduction technology
- Promotion of energy efficiency and conservation
  - Enhancement of residential and commercial energy efficiency
  - Implementation of new building regulations
  - Retrofitting existing structures
- Promotion of renewable energy (wind & solar)
  - Establishment of government funding and financial incentives to develop and implement low carbon technologies and emissions reduction strategies
- Potential use of low emissions coal technology as a stopgap measure
- Monitoring and transparency in emissions data
- Stimulation of local-to-local collaboration
  - Facilitation of communication both within China and on an international scale
  - Emphasis on co-development and cooperation among corporations, in lieu of government mandates

**Cultural Understanding**

- Address climate change within framework of sustainable development
- Keep the focus on concrete issues and practical applications
- Understand your audience (urban vs. rural; wealthy vs. poor)
- Recognize disconnect(s) between national, provincial, municipal, county and township governments
- Avoid putting climate change in a political framework
- Appeal to a sense of long-term thinking and connect sustainability to economic growth

**For Further Consideration**

Is the developed/developing dichotomy valid? Solutions to environmental and developmental problems can be found and implemented in both China and the U.S. How should the U.S. integrate lessons from China’s experience and culture?

How do we address coal? Both the U.S. and China rely heavily on coal for energy consumption, and thus there is an inclination to use each other as an excuse for lack of action. Successful moderation of climate change will hinge on both countries confronting and mitigating the issues directly.

How do we avoid a G-2 dominated political climate? China and the U.S. are not the only stakeholders in climate change talks. Working within a multi-lateral communication framework may ensure that the U.S. and China pursue adequate measures to address climate change.